

The seventeenth meeting of the Uxbridge Charter Review Committee, held on a Zoom platform, was called to order by Chair Patrick Stephan at 6:32 PM, Monday, March 1, 2021.

REC'D UXB TOWN CLERK  
2021 MAY 11 AM 8:08

**Members Present:** Patrick Stephan, Chairman; Ray Talke, Clerk; including Committee Members: Chief Jeff Lourie, Melissa Desmarais, Atty. Rob Knapik, Michael Potaski and Dr. Joann Lindenmayer

**Members Absent:** Barry Desruisseaux and Ron Parsons

**Participating remotely from office:** Donna C. Hardy, Assistant

**Open Public Forum:** Ms. Hardy was the only individual present for Citizens' Forum.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

#### **Meeting Minutes:**

**MOTION** by Chief Lourie to accept the meeting minutes of February 15, 2021. Motion was seconded by Atty. Knapik. Motion carried 7-0-1 (Mr. Potaski abstained).

#### **Input from the Community:**

Chairman Stephan sent interview notes to the committee, along with links to Home Rule Charters from other towns in the area.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

#### **Deliberation topic - DPW & Highway Departments:**

There was much debate as to whether or not a Water & Sewer Commission should stand on its own, rather than being part of the Board of Selectmen. All of the current Selectmen and several other interviewees recommended a separate Water and Sewer Commission.

As local examples, the Town of Grafton has a Public Works Commission & a Sewer Works Commission, while the Town of Westborough has a Treatment Plant Board for sewer only.

The Committee discussed what the functions would be for the Highway, DPW, Sewer, Water Advisory or Policy Boards. There was discussion about qualifications of members of a Water and Sewer Commission (public utility professionals, rate payers, residents, engineers or other persons of interest) and whether or not the BOS

should be the appointing authority. Also, the committee discussed whether the Water & Sewer commission should be appointed or elected.

**To summarize**, the committee will seek input from the town's residents. The Committee was generally in favor of recommending a Water & Sewer Commission that would be separate from the Board of Selectmen. The Committee was not in favor of having an advisory board for the DPW at this time.

**NEW BUSINESS continued:**

**Call to action:**

Attorney Knapik will look into how the Town of Grafton DPW and Water & Sewer Commission are organized and operate.

**Discussion of deliberation of topics – Town Manager**

The Committee reviewed exit interview comments from former town employees.

The Town Manager must be qualified & competent to make decisions, which influences the relationship with the Selectmen.

The Town Manager presently handles all Human Resource issues. A Human Resources Professional was recommended in several interviews to handle yearly performance reviews, along with reviewing current positions, qualifications, job descriptions, grievance and union processes. The Town Manager presently has a company handling a salary analysis. This committee is in favor of having a Human Resources Professional appointed by the Town Manager.

Additional discussions revolved around whether or not the town needs a Deputy Town Manager to fill in when the Town Manager is out of the office. The general consensus was to leave the language in the Charter, which states that the town Manager may appoint an interim Town Manager with approval of the Selectmen. Additional discussion was related to how the Town Manager should handle the departure of a department head.

Mr. Potaski left the meeting.

Dr. Lindenmayer recommended that the Committee should change language in the Charter to allow Board of Selectmen members that have been in office for at least six (6) months to have a vote in decisions related to removal of the Town Manager.

**Discussion of deliberation of topics - Police & Fire Chief**

The Committee discussed whether the Police Chief should have authority to hire and fire Police Department employees. The present and previous Police Chiefs recommend this change.

Consensus from the Committee is that full authority should be given to the Police Chief in hiring, firing and discipline in the Police Department (perhaps with support from a Human Resources professional). Chief Lourie mentioned that in-depth background check are done by the Police Chief on prospective employees in the Police Department..

**MOTION** to adjourn by Dr. Lindenmayer. Motion was seconded by Chief Lourie. Motion carried 6-0-0. The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:25 PM.

**Respectfully submitted,**  
**Donna C. Hardy**  
**Uxbridge Charter Review Committee Assistant**

